



Soft Outcomes: A Shared Approach

A guide to show you how to
capture the soft outcomes you
achieve through your work and to
demonstrate them with confidence
to your funders

Acknowledgements

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An accessible version of this guide is available at <http://www.equalbrightonandhove.org/SharedApproach>.

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- Constructing Futures, a project delivering practical training in construction techniques and additional work placements for 16-25 year old people who are not in education, employment or training. See <http://www.constructingfutures.co.uk>.
- Motorvation, a motor vehicle maintenance course aimed at young people and long-term unemployed older (50+) workers in a practical work environment. See <http://www.sussexyouth.org.uk/index.asp?c=23>.

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Soft Outcomes: A Shared Approach

Contents

Introduction to the Shared Approach	4
Rationale	5
Outcomes and Project Planning	6
Hard and Soft Outcomes	7
Outcome 'Levels' and Soft Skills	7
The Shared Approach	8
1. Initial Consultations & Shared Understandings	8
2. Starting to Think About Outcomes	9
3. SMART Outcomes	10
4. Identifying and Scaling Indicators	11
5. Self-Reflection: Bias and Norms	12
6. Recording Information	13
7. Demonstrating Soft Outcomes	14
8. Implementation, Review & Development	15
Conclusion	17
Further Sources of Information	18

Introduction to the Shared Approach

This is a guide to help you develop systems to record and demonstrate the distance travelled towards soft outcomes by your project or programme. It will guide you through how to create your own custom tool to enable this in 8 key steps.



By following these steps, you or your project should be able to put in place reliable means of demonstrating the soft outcomes of your work, and to target activities more closely towards them, using the best resources that you have at hand – the experience and knowledge of your staff, board members, and your service users.

The guide is split into two sections. The first deals with why we have produced this guide, what soft outcomes are, how capturing them fits into an outcome approach to project planning, and information about outcome levels and soft skills. The second section is the approach to developing a tool itself. A series of exercises that help to guide you through the eight steps are available from the *Equal Brighton & Hove* website: <http://www.equalbrightonandhove.org/SharedApproach>.

Definitions of the terminology used in this guide have been provided throughout, but a little prior knowledge about soft outcomes and the outcomes approach to project planning is necessary for you to get the most out of this guide. For information about outcomes in general refer to:

- ***Managing Outcomes: A Guide for Homeless Organisations***
(Charities Evaluation Service, 2003)
- ***Explaining the difference your project makes: A BIG guide to using an outcomes approach***
(Big Lottery Fund, 2006).

Good starting points for information about soft outcomes and distance travelled include :

- ***A Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled***
(Institute for Employment Studies, 2000)
- ***A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled***
(Welsh European Funding Office, 2004).

Details of how to access these and other references can be found in the *Further Sources of Information* section of this guide.

Rationale

This guide has been produced as a result of research conducted by Equal Brighton & Hove, which found that:

1) None of the currently available tools for capturing soft outcomes are applicable to all projects, and it seems unlikely that any will ever be so;

2) The more hard-to-reach a group or an individual is, the more likely that soft outcomes will be the primary outcomes of project work;

3) When appropriate, projects should be designed with soft outcomes in mind;

4) Aside from a possible step towards employment, soft outcomes should be valued as a key aspect of an agenda focused on social inclusion.

Source: *Soft Skills and Soft Outcomes – Results and Findings of the Soft Outcome Review Visits* (Farrer L, 2007)

Because no ‘one size fits all’ tool is applicable to project work and capturing soft outcomes effectively requires that it is integrated closely into project design, the shared approach explains how to capture soft outcomes as part of an outcomes approach to project planning. It is not a guide about how to use existing tools and approaches (refer to the references for this), and neither does it help projects treat soft outcomes as separate to other aspects of project work.

It is hoped that dissemination of this guide will help to build knowledge and confidence within provider organisations about soft (or qualitative) data. This will enable them to report with more confidence and with more consistency to funders. In turn, funders should more fully realise the importance of soft outcomes, and have confidence in the data that they are being provided by frontline organisations.

Outcomes and Project Planning

Inputs: Resources required to deliver your activities.

Outputs: The actual day-to-day activities, services, opening times and sessions that you deliver to achieve your outcomes.

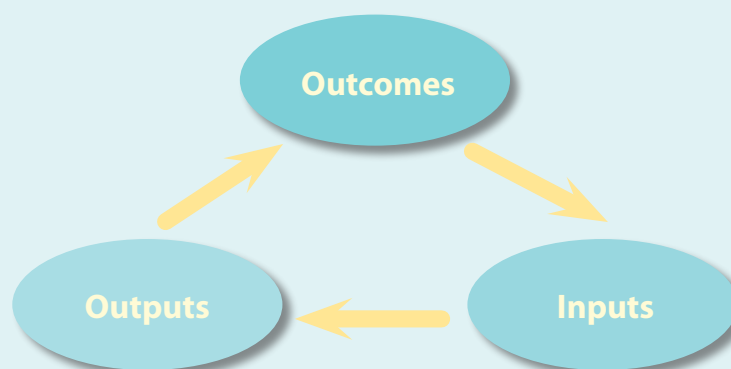
Outcomes: The changes that occur as a result of the activities that you provide.

It may be tempting to plan a project by trying to obtain resources to do things, but this is the wrong way round. Planning without considering the resources (inputs) that you have at hand, or targeting activities (outputs) without thinking about the outcomes you want to achieve will result in you running a project that lacks impact and may fail to convince funders of its worth. Without review or formal evaluation you may find that your project drifts and gradually stops achieving what it was set up to do.

The following diagram represents how resources, activities, the impact you wish to make, and the discussions and reviews that you undertake relate to each other within a project or programme.



An outcomes approach describes a process where you consciously aim for certain outcomes, and deliver activities accordingly. It requires that you start thinking about the outcomes that you want to achieve and then about the resources that you will need to achieve them. As shown in the following diagram, outcomes, outputs and inputs continually affect each other.



Hard and Soft Outcomes

Quantitative:

*Expressible as a quantity
or susceptible to measurement.*

Definitions

Qualitative:

*Concerned with qualities
or comparisons that are based on qualities.*

Outcomes are usually defined as being 'hard' (quantitative) or 'soft' (qualitative). We adhere to this usage so that it fits in with other guides, approaches and research documents currently in existence, though it may clarify matters if you think about things in terms of quantities and qualities instead.

Hard outcomes are specific, directly-measurable results of project work such as service users obtaining employment or enrolling on a training course. They require the recording of data only when that hard outcome has been achieved.

Soft outcomes are changes resulting from project work that are not directly measurable. They require the identification of 'indicators' (or qualities) for measurement and recording. Examples of soft outcomes include increased confidence in the office, or reduced isolation from mainstream educational provision.

A soft outcome is not normally achieved or arrived at in the same way as a hard outcome. Instead, progress towards a soft outcome is called "distance travelled" and this is assessed in relation to the indicators that you select.

The shared approach is applicable to projects that aim to achieve hard or soft outcomes. By working towards capturing soft outcomes you automatically enable yourself to capture the hard ones too.

Outcome 'Levels' and Soft Skills

Outcomes can have an effect at a number of different levels, such as the community, neighbourhood, organisational, regional or policy level. Each of these will present different issues in terms of identifying suitable indicators, collecting data relevant to those indicators, and ensuring that the time-scales involved are realistic and manageable.

Many projects choose to work towards outcomes at a variety of different levels. Although this guide uses examples of outcomes relating to service users, this is only for purposes of clarity. The principle of an approach that is designed with soft outcomes in mind should be applicable to any of these outcome levels.

Some projects may also want to measure how they are developing soft skills. The meaning of a 'soft skill' and a 'soft outcome' very much depends on definition. This guide treats skills as attributes that are developed directly through project work, and outcomes as the sum result of a service user's involvement in a project.

Again, many of the steps involved in developing a project with soft outcomes in mind will be applicable to developing systems to measure and demonstrate soft skills, though it will not form part of an outcomes approach as such.

The Shared Approach

1. Initial Consultations & Shared Understandings

The first step of the shared approach is to consult widely. This includes everyone who has a stake in the process including front-line workers, managers, committee members, clients and your funders; these constitute your stakeholders. This ensures that everyone understands why you want to start capturing soft outcome data, and the practical steps (outlined in this guide) that you will go through to make this happen. This can reduce resistance to the process and increase 'buy-in'. It can also help avoid difficulties before they are encountered.

Shared definitions (or understandings) are a prerequisite to the development of effective means of capturing and demonstrating soft outcomes. One of the key findings of research conducted by *Equal Brighton & Hove* was that project staff had different understandings of what skills and outcomes were within projects and across the programme as a whole. No doubt this is the case elsewhere too. Such a situation creates confusion about what the aims of the process are and wastes energy.

Initial consultations should ensure that stakeholders have a clear understanding of the terminology used, including 'outcomes', 'outputs', 'soft outcomes', 'hard outcomes', and 'skills'. Definitions have been supplied in this guide, but even if you disagree with them, the most important thing is that you and your stakeholders come up with a set that you all agree with.

Throughout this guide, we will be following a fictional case study called *Movement2Work* to help illustrate some of the steps and processes involved.



The initial consultation

Case Study

Movement2Work is a project running in three cities that aims to re-engage young people with education, employment and training (EET) opportunities.

A meeting is arranged to discuss how staff can report the real impact (outcomes) of their work to funders rather than their outputs. During a brainstorming session case workers state that they also want to be able to deliver activities that achieve a greater impact than they currently do. Staff agree that discovering what the key barriers are to EET will help target delivery more accurately.

In addition, managers state that they want to be able to monitor the consistency of work across the different cities so that best practice can be identified and maximum impact delivered across all three cities.

A number of stakeholders choose to attend a second meeting to take the process forward.

2. Starting to Think About Outcomes

There are two approaches to identifying outcomes:

1. *To concentrate on outcomes that you already achieve;*
2. *To concentrate on the aims of your programme or funding stream and consider outcomes for each and every barrier (to employment, social inclusion, etc) that your service users face. For example, if your funding stream aims to increase the uptake of health services by a particular group, then think about the barriers that this group has to taking up these services and develop outcomes based on these.*



It may be tempting for operational projects or programmes to go for the first approach because it avoids too much change. However, the more carefully you target delivery to the outcomes that you want to achieve, the greater the impact your project or programme will have. The ideal is to have a set of outcomes that represent maximum impact. In many cases this will be a balance between the outcomes that are determined by funders, and the outcomes that your service users and staff consider significant.



Identification of the three key barriers

Case Study

At a second meeting at Movement2Work, staff discuss issues that prevent young people from engaging with EET opportunities. After sorting through a lot of suggestions, they agree that there are three main barriers:

- **Barrier 1:** A low level of confidence in abilities;
- **Barrier 2:** A negative experience of mainstream education;
- **Barrier 3:** The chaotic nature of clients' lives.

Stakeholders decide that each of these three barriers has an associated soft outcome that the project should be working towards:

- **Barrier 1 outcome:** Increased confidence in abilities;
- **Barrier 2 outcome:** A more positive experience or perception of mainstream education;
- **Barrier 3 outcome:** Increased stability in young peoples' lives.

The project already works to some extent towards these key outcomes – though it has never been stated in this way before.

3. SMART Outcomes

Specific: *Are your outcomes specific, tightly defined, unambiguous, and relating to the issues that you are trying to address?*

Definitions

Measurable: *Is it possible to measure your outcomes at the start of your project and at the end in either quantitative or qualitative terms?*

Achievable: *Are the outcomes that you have chosen considered to be achievable by all your stakeholders?*

Relevant: *Do your outcomes have a connection to your priorities?*

Time-bound: *Do these outcomes fit within the lifecycle of your project or are they aspirational?*

Make sure that your outcomes are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound). One of the reasons for going through this process is so that you can effectively demonstrate the soft outcomes that you achieve through your work. If the outcomes that you have chosen are not SMART then you will not be able to use the 'end product' of the shared approach.

Do not choose more outcomes than you have to. Some projects may have only one soft outcome to work towards, while others may have significantly more at a variety of different levels. Favouring fewer outcomes will allow you to carefully collect data about them. Choosing more can be burdensome for project staff and result in energy being spread too widely for the impact of their work to be measured.



Idea Project - Sussex Employment Services (See Lloyd & Sullivan, 2004)

This project created a profile for 16 different Profile Areas (e.g. Behaviour, Feedback, Time Keeping, Literacy, Commitment), and rated them according to the scales described below.

P – Positive strengths identified which could contribute to successful transitions (to employment).

N – No issues identified which could hinder successful transitions.

G – General issues identified.

S – Significant and/or specific issues identified

C – Critical and/or complex issues identified.



4. Identifying and Scaling Indicators

To assess whether someone is making progress towards a soft outcome, suitable indicators (quantities or qualities) for that soft outcome need to be chosen. Caseworkers and clients may already have a wealth of knowledge about appropriate indicators. Basing indicators on past experience can help you justify them to funders. You may want to think about the merits of qualitative and quantitative indicators and settle for wholly qualitative, wholly quantitative, or a mixture of the two.

Quantitative indicators are easy to collect and don't usually need to be assessed or graded. For example, one of the quantitative indicators for 'IT proficiency' is typing speed, which can be recorded as words per minute typed on a keyboard using a software programme.

Qualitative indicators on the other hand require you to make assessments about the data in terms of how far it represents progress towards an outcome. For example, if a project decides to rate service users between 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent) for their interview technique, these numbers don't mean anything unless there are descriptions of what each of those 10 different numbers actually represent. Only then will those numbers help make consistent assessments and assist in identifying appropriate evidence that can be collected for each rating.

Most soft outcomes have several possible indicators, some of which may be qualitative and others that may be quantitative. For example, indicators for 'increased confidence in the office' might include being prepared to ask questions (a qualitative indicator) and the percentage of telephone calls they decide to take per day (a quantitative indicator).



Capturing evidence

Case Study

Example: *Project workers decide that they want a simple four point scale for assessing distance travelled towards 'Confidence in abilities' and decide upon the following as a working draft:*

- 1- Little or no confidence in abilities and generally negative about how to improve them or learn in general.*
- 2- Some understanding of the skills and strengths that can be brought to a situation, but confidence lacking.*
- 3- Generally keen to use strengths and skills in different situations but misconceptions about how to apply them, demonstrate them, or the limits to them.*
- 4- Reasonable level of understanding and confidence in abilities, how they can be applied to various tasks or responsibilities, and keen to demonstrate this in practice.*

If you are struggling to select indicators then it may be because you know that they are going to be difficult to measure, or because you're being over-ambitious about what you want to achieve. For example, if the long-term outcome of your mentoring project is to reduce the perception of the risk of crime for people living in a certain area of a city, then you may find it difficult to gather information or link that outcome directly to your project unless you pay for extensive research during and beyond your project's existence. In cases such as these it will be necessary to go back to your outcomes and look at the time-scales for achieving them. This will probably entail listing early, intermediate, and final outcomes of your work separately.



5. Self-Reflection: Bias and Norms

Normative: *An assumed standard of correctness in behaviour, speech, writing, etc., or favouring its establishment.*

Leading: *To influence, cause or guide towards.*

Bias: *Favouring one point of view or opinion rather than remaining neutral.*

Definitions

The use of normative, leading, or biased language to describe outcomes or indicators should be avoided. In the example of Movement2Work that we have been following so far, project workers have chosen to go beyond a numerical scale but have settled on subjective assessments such as “Little or no confidence”/“some understanding”/“reasonable level”.

Although these are fine as a starting point in the development of a tool, it would be better to refine the descriptions so that measurable indicators for them can be chosen – perhaps as part of a structured interview or role play. For example, certain responses to an interview may actually indicate ‘no confidence’ or ‘reasonable levels of understanding’, and these can then be listed as indicators for that part of the tool.

The phrasing of indicators or outcomes is also important. Asking if someone is ‘comfortable with authority’ might carry a built-in assumption that they should be trusting of people in authority; this could leave them vulnerable to abuse. A much more useful question would be to ask if someone feels comfortable handling authority, because an empowered individual will know when authority is demanding something unreasonable, unnecessary, or illegal.

For projects that aim to increase ‘motivation’, the questions to resolve here are “*motivation to do what?*” and “*in which circumstances?*”. Someone may be motivated to do nothing – not a lack of motivation as such – for a variety of different reasons, so it is important to keep in mind the specific soft outcomes (in terms of motivation in this case) that you want service users to progress towards.

In addition to reducing ambiguity and avoiding leading questions, consider social context. Everyone has their own views about what constitutes ‘appropriate’ dress, ‘punctuality’ or ‘communication skills’, etc. In instances where a project is being delivered by many staff, across a number of different sites or departments, or involving more than one organisation, this will be particularly important.

Many of the tools described in Lloyd & O’Sullivan (2004) have carefully worded scales for each indicator.

What does “chaotic life” mean?

Case Study

As part of the process of developing indicators for ‘chaotic lives’ (outcome number 3), it quickly becomes clear that stakeholders’ backgrounds and values differ widely about what they consider ‘chaotic’ or ‘stable’ to be.

The project team decides to avoid trying to define what a ‘stable’ life is. Instead they concentrate on key aspects of a young person’s life such as housing, meals, relationships, and legal or other issues, creating a set of questions and criteria about each of these.

This ensures that staff values and opinions are not playing a part in the assessments.



6. Recording Information

Validate: *To establish soundness, confirm, to make valid.*

Record: *To set down, to register, to document.*

Definitions

The next step is to consider how information is to be gathered, and how it is to be recorded. In order to record distance travelled towards a soft outcome, a baseline measurement must be taken. A baseline is a snapshot of where a service user stands in relation to a soft outcome at the start of their involvement in your work. This is usually part of an initial assessment because this ensures that the recording of soft outcomes is integrated into project procedures.

Once you have a baseline you can take further 'readings' later on to see how far people have travelled towards the soft outcome. Bear in mind that service users may have 'bad days', which can particularly affect data if you only record at start and end points of user involvement. More frequent recordings can give a greater insight into service user progression but can at the same time threaten to 'bog a project down' with recording data rather than delivering activities.

Some indicators require the use of informal conversations, interviews, questionnaires, or observations. You could involve several stakeholders in assessment or collect material evidence to support indicator assessments. Dewson *et al* (2000, p9) has a useful list of different means of data collection.

Record only the information that you need. In some ways a lack of information is better than an over-abundance because it makes it clear where you need to concentrate your efforts rather than confusing you with too much detail. Although it can be tempting to validate findings, keeping things simple is usually the best approach. If recording is carried out consistently then validation should be unnecessary.

Learning Coaches (Creating Futures Ltd.), Equal Brighton & Hove Example

At the start of filling in an Action Plan Form, three outcomes/attributes are recorded (Motivation, Confidence & Hope for the Future) using the scale detailed below. The worker then records specific details of the support given, goals, and next steps & timescales.

- 1 = very low
-
-
-
- 5 = high

Using interviews to demonstrate distance travelled Case Study

Example: *Movement2Work create a set of semi-structured interview questions concentrating on activities that the project has organised as a way of assessing whether young people have travelled any distance towards each of the three soft outcomes. The results should fit on one page and should be easy to store.*

As a means of verification, young people are asked to comment on the indicators that project workers have identified, and create a short action plan based upon them. In this way, capturing information about soft outcomes becomes a way of recording what has been achieved as well as a tool in the development process with the project's clients.



7. Demonstrating Soft Outcomes

- *Who is this information about soft outcomes to be used by?*
- *Will data about the indicators be shown to clients so that they can recognise their own progress?*
- *Can it be used as a way of mentoring a client as part of the project?*
- *Is this data for evaluation or funding requirements?*

These questions and others affect how data can be recorded and demonstrated. Attention should always be paid to relevant data protection legislation.

Some projects use paper-based means of recording soft outcomes. Others input data into a spreadsheet so that the results show distance travelled through the use of graphs or other visual means. Some organisations such as CentrePoint in London ask service users to input their data directly into an IT system because it is the most appropriate and effective way of engaging them.

It may be appropriate to ask service users to decide how they would like the data to be visually represented through consultation with them; this will enable them to be directly involved in the design process. If enough stakeholders are involved and existing tools have been reviewed you will probably already have an idea about the kind of visual representation most appropriate for your project.

Examples of tools can be found in:

- **The Evaluation Toolkit**
(Befriending Network
(Scotland), 2007)
- **Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled**
(Welsh European Funding
Office, 2004).



Alcohol Outcomes Spider, Alcohol Concern (See Burns, 2004)

Example

This is a very detailed system, which each of the 8 Outcomes (Physical Health, Mental & Emotional Needs, Social Contacts & Networks, etc) having an individually tailored description and rating. The following is the scoring for the 'Internal Journey' Outcome.

- 1 – Not acknowledge a problem with alcohol.
- 2 – Acknowledge need for support but not effectively engaged.
- 3 – Accept support but not open to exploring issues.
- 4 – Explore issues within treatment.
- 5 – Increased self-awareness/understanding around alcohol misuse.
- 6 – Accepting responsibility for recovery.
- 7 – Taking responsibility for maintaining progress.
- 8 – Increased integration into "normal life" / independent.

8. Implementation, Review & Development

Tools must be specific to a project's aims, objectives, target group(s) and any number of other factors. Ideally your tool should complement activities and fit into existing work so that it becomes an asset to delivery rather than an additional layer of reporting to various stakeholders.

Sources generally indicate that developing an appropriate framework can take a substantial period of time. Burns (2005) describes how the Alcohol Spider was developed in conjunction with 40 other alcohol services. After an initial round of consultation days where workers and managers of the agencies involved described the main outcomes they wanted to achieve and how their work affected other aspects of a client's life, the indicators or 'spider's legs' were developed. Participating agencies commented on early drafts of the tool and then spent 3-4 months piloting a final draft before having a final round of meetings.

Continually review use of the tool that you have developed: it should never be considered complete or 'perfect'. Projects that go through the process of developing a tool before actually delivering activities can expect to significantly revise their outcomes and indicators as they learn about how their project works and what the barriers that their service users face are.

In addition, projects need to be able to adapt their tools so that they stay relevant to changing conditions such as funders changing their priorities, revised aims within a project team, or an altered economic or political context.

Managing project changes

ASpire, Brighton & Hove Community Initiatives

See <http://www.aspire.bhci.org>.

Case Study

This project originally developed because research identified a gap in support for getting people with Aspergers (AS) into employment.

However, it soon became apparent that there were already organisations addressing this need. Instead the project began to address a lack of opportunities for - and understanding of - people with AS. It moved into this area of work by training employers and raising awareness of the condition with other agencies.

It also became clear that many people with AS were not progressing to employment because of confidence issues, and low self-esteem and self-awareness resulting in isolation, anxiety and depression.

Instead of working towards a hard outcome such as employment, the project discovered that it had to work on these other issues as a precursor to employment. These soft outcomes also took much longer to resolve than expected; sometimes it could take months just to build up trust with some service users.

Once individual service users had travelled some distance towards breaking down barriers to employment, staff from ASpire were able to work in conjunction with other employment agencies or disability employment advisers to help find people suitable work placements. This happened at different times with different service users because their barriers to employment varied from service user to service user.

In effect the project not only changed focus but also found through practice that the barriers to employment faced by service users were different to those anticipated at the start. This resulted in the delivery of different activities, and a different set of outcomes to work towards to.

Piloting the Approach

Case Study

Example: After initial consultations, one of the three offices running the project piloted the new soft outcomes system for Movement2Work.

The means of collecting data was quickly improved upon and it was incorporated into existing reporting requirements. Meetings and feedback were presented to funders for comment and the projects' activities were altered so that they focussed more tightly on the 3 key soft outcomes identified through the process.

As a result, the 3 key barriers that were identified for the project's client group were being more effectively broken down. The system was then rolled out to the other two offices, using staff trained and experienced in the system to train others.



Bridges to Progress East & Mid Lothian (See Lloyd & Sullivan, 2004)

Example

This project identified over 50 standards (e.g. Manage conflict in the workplace appropriately, Read to the functional level required) in six core skills (e.g. Motivation/Attitude, Basic Skills) needed to record improvements in employability.

- 1= There is demonstrably no recognition of a problem, or there is a severe lack of skill to deal with a clear area of deficit.
- 2= The individual has recognised and accepted the need to address an area of deficit but has not yet developed the skills to do so.
- 3= The individual has been involved in drawing up a plan of action to address his/her areas of need and is beginning to work towards accumulating evidence to demonstrate the acquisition of the necessary skills.
- 4= The individual is fully involved in evidencing his/her growing competence.
- 5= The individual has demonstrated competence in relation to an area of deficit and has sustained this competence over a period of time.
- 6= The individual is deemed to be fully competent and operating consistently in a way that demonstrates self-reliance.

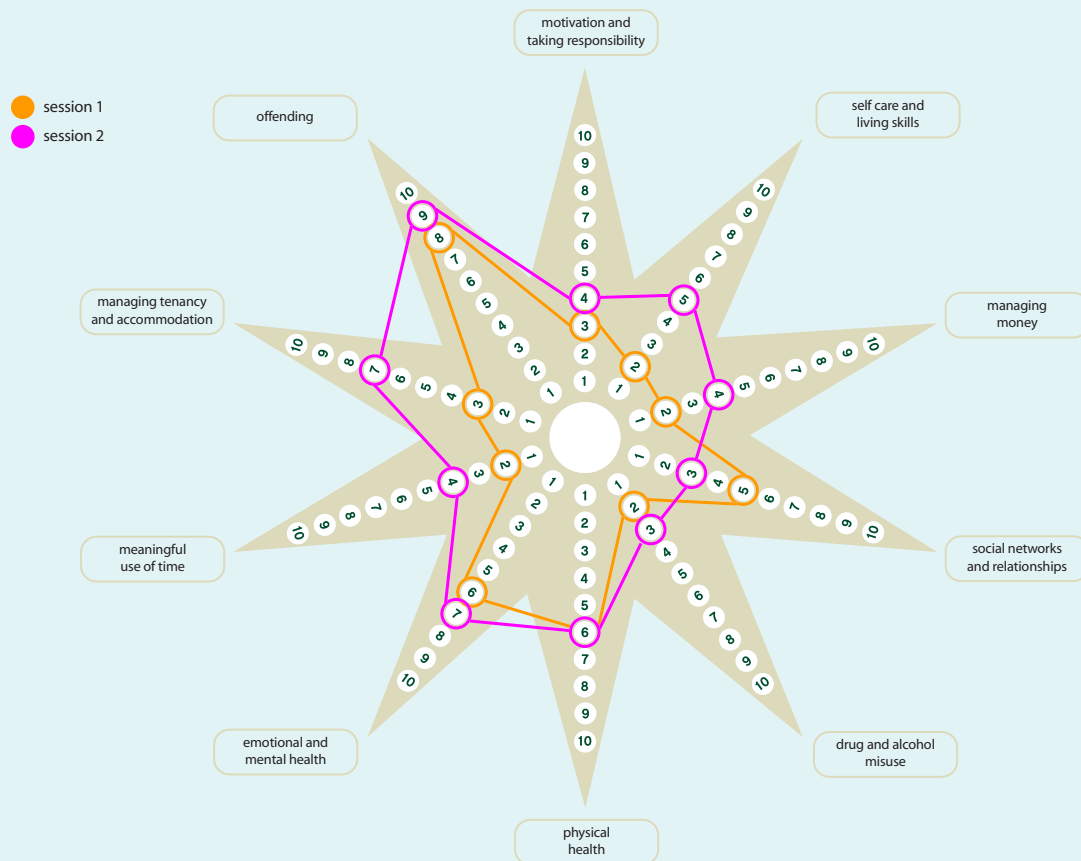
Conclusion

You have now finished going through the steps and should have gained an insight into an outcomes approach that enables reporting of soft outcome data to stakeholders. The appendix lists further sources of information about the outcomes approach and existing soft outcomes tools, and the webpage at <http://www.equalbrightonandhove.org/SharedApproach> has exercises that help guide you through the process.

It is probably worth raising a point about language at this point. Terminology that was originally devised to sound simple and easy to remember (“hard” and “soft”) has actually ended up clouding issues due to the connotations that the words hard (‘milestones’, ‘important’, ‘durable’) and soft (‘intermediate’, ‘woolly’, ‘intangible’) have in common parlance. Using the terms quantitative and qualitative means that we can avoid these connotations and treat both with the importance that they deserve.

Finally, it is more than possible that the processes described in this guide will be found to be wanting in certain respects. For this reason, Equal Brighton & Hove makes it available with a Creative Commons License that allows modifications and alterations so long as an identical licence is used for derivative works. Full details can be found on in the *Acknowledgements* section.

The Outcomes Star (London Housing Association)



Reproduced with permission, see <http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk>

Further Sources of Information

- **Burns S – Alcohol Outcomes Spire: Scales and Guidance Notes; Alcohol Concern (2005)**
An example of an outcome recording tool developed for Alcohol Concern.
See http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/servlets/wrapper/book_detail.jsp?id=8523.
- **Burns S & Cupitt S – Managing Outcomes: A Guide for Homeless Organisations; Charities Evaluation Service (2003)**
This is geared towards homelessness related organisations, but applicable to other kinds too - a practical guide to developing outcome measurement systems.
See: <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/index.cfm?format=22>.
- **Burns S & MacKeith J – Explaining the difference your project makes: A BIG guide to using an outcomes approach; Big Lottery Fund (2006)**
A guide about bidding for money from the Big Lottery Fund, but also useful for considering an outcomes approach before a project has begun, and how to start thinking about how you can report on your outcomes.
See: http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/er_eval_explaining_the_difference.pdf.
- **Dewson S, Eccles J, Tackey ND & Jackson A – Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled; Institute for Employment Studies (2000)**
This is a very useful overview of different systems employed to measure soft outcomes and distance travelled.
See http://www.esf.gov.uk/_docs/distance%5B1%5D.pdf.
- **Farrer L - Soft Skills and Soft Outcomes – Results and Findings of the Soft Outcome Review Visits; Equal Brighton & Hove (2007)**
Background research on Equal Brighton & Hove projects that led directly to the development of the shared approach.
See [http://www.equalbrightonandhove.org/files/Paper_1_-_Results_and_Findings_of_the_Soft_Outcomes_Visit_Process_\(2007\).pdf](http://www.equalbrightonandhove.org/files/Paper_1_-_Results_and_Findings_of_the_Soft_Outcomes_Visit_Process_(2007).pdf).
- **Lloyd R & O'Sullivan F - Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: a Methodology for Developing a Guidance Document; DWP (2004)**
An overview document to accompany the Welsh European Funding Office article about surveys regarding soft outcome measurement tools and systems.
See [http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/WP8\(2\).pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/WP8(2).pdf).
- **A Practical Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled; Welsh European Funding Office (2004)**
A very useful report about soft outcome reporting methods commissioned by the Welsh European Funding Office.
See http://www.wefo.wales.gov.uk/resource/Soft_Outcomes_Leavers_Study_E7217.pdf.
- **The Evaluation Toolkit; Befriending Network (Scotland) (2007)**
A guide about evaluation for befriending projects, but ties into an outcome approach to project planning and has examples of means of recording qualitative outcomes of work.
See <http://www.befriending.co.uk/pdfstore/EVALRESOURCEPACK.pdf>.

A comprehensive list of resources, papers, tools, and research can be found at: <http://www.equalbrightonandhove.org/node/184>.

